

the present time of any of the Saxon building. This question is one on which it is difficult to come to a satisfactory conclusion. But if even we cannot prove to a certainty the existence of the remains of the original church, this venerable and in many respects impressive building has great claims for our consideration; amongst the most prominent, is the circumstance that the Abbey of Saint Albans is almost entirely built with the remains of the Roman city of Verulam; and that it contains, to a remarkable extent, varied examples of the most rude and early styles, as well as the more recent and elaborate peculiarities of the more recent periods.

The east screen, of which we subjoin an engraving, was intended to conceal the saint's shrine from the vulgar, and was probably designed by Abbot Wheathamsted, and finally erected by Wallingford: its north and south ends abut against the centre of two arches on the sides of the choir; along the top of it, defended by a slight balustrade, is a passage from one side of the building to the other. Clutterbuck, in his "History of Hertford," gives an engraving of this screen, in which he shows a considerable portion of the front covered by carved woodwork. This had probably been placed to cover the bare appearance which is caused by the removal of the representation of our Saviour on the Cross which is engraved in Dr. Stukely's "Itinerarium Curiosum." This woodwork, which was probably erected about the middle of the last century, has been removed and has exposed a sad extent of dilapidation; indeed, the whole of the screen and many portions of the church require prompt attention. We believe the utmost possible use is made of all available means, and that a praiseworthy spirit is shown by the rector to preserve objects of interest, but we fear that it will require more than the present exertions to save many portions of this interesting relic from destruction. It might be the effect of imagination, but it seemed that the fracture in the south wall of the nave had increased in extent since the writer visited this place five years ago.*

BUCKINGHAM PALACE—THE MARBLE ARCH.

SOMETIMES at the relief of guard and other excuses for idlers to congregate, one catches a remark which, though not artistic, denotes that the people are not indensible to the general effect as well as the objects of architecture.

Before the new front of Buckingham Palace the other day, one young man, a mechanic, observing the figures on the top, said to his companion (a sailor), "Jack, them ere figures is too high, particularly the family of small children to the right; they never give us any statues even with our walk, where one might see their proportions." "Yes," replied Jack, "I likes that party to the starboard, which is no doubt our good queen's little family; but the prince on the larboard has very little clothes on. But, Jem," replied the tar, "how are they going to get in? there's but one gate—but I s'pose it's to save another porter in these hard times."

"Well," said the mechanic, "I don't nobow like the situation; it's low and damp, besides it's all closed in and no ventilation—quite as bad as Gough-square, where the insensatory Commission visited me and my little uns, and insisted on a back current of air and the stopping up of the cesspools. Will they do nothing with the twenty-acre-cesspool in the gardens behind?"

"Lord love you," rejoined the tar, "her Majesty knows how we manage at sea: depend on it she'll rig some poles and hoist a wind-sail—that's our way to give a stiff breeze in the hold: but what are they going to do with that other gate—the marble companion abast the main hatchway?"

That was just the point I was considering at the moment, and having given you some crochets already as to its disposal, perhaps as it is now going—just a-going, and will very soon be gone—you will allow me to refer to one of my former suggestions, which was

* A plan, &c., with some curious particulars of the Abbey Church at St. Albans, will be found in our Vol. V., p. 542, in a notice of Messrs. Buckler's interesting History of this building.—Ed.

to place it in the grand caseway which should be opened from Portland-place to the long walk, Regent's-park. This was the design of George IV. when the long walk was planted. The arch should stand on the verge of the inner park and New-road, and would at the same time give a most appropriate and elegant entrance to the park created by royal taste, and present a grand coup-d'œil, as viewed from Portland-place, disclosing a vista of great extent and beauty, terminating on the Highgate-hill: as none of our thoroughfares have any affinity to the picturesque, this would be a very apposite commencement.

Report once stated that it was destined to stand as an entrance to the long walk at Windsor! What affinity can exist between the fine Gothic pile of the Castle and this ornate Roman composition?*

The modern taste for the composite is very prevalent, but what can we say to this undertaking? It reminds me of an undertaker to whom it was referred to make a pageant for a middle-aged lady,—he mixed the plumes black and white.

But apart from jesting, is there not some truth in the remark—"They never give us any statues even with our walk?" Abroad, the people are familiarized with art, and particularly sculpture: in the gardens of the Tuileries—the Giardini at Naples—in all the repositories of ancient taste and treasure, free access is never denied even to the mechanic; and there they are as capable of discoursing on the perfect examples of ancient and modern masters, as they are of singing the music by their composers in harmony or parts.

It is to be hoped that the improved taste for arts at home will extend to the commonality such advantages as the illustrious productions of art cannot fail to confer on the public mind; for they elevate vulgar tastes, and lead them from the contemplation of the sublime and beautiful up to the rational worship of Nature's God.

QUONDAM.

DESTRUCTION OF WORKS OF DESIGN.

ROBBERY AT MR. HOPE'S HOME.

No one can regret this occurrence more than I do; but it appears to me hardly to justify Mr. Hope's inferred conclusion against the general security of works of art publicly exhibited.

That they may be so exhibited is said (by those who are of that opinion), to be insured by several circumstances; by the class of visitors they attract; their desire to deserve the confidence voluntarily shows them; the publicity with which robbery must be committed, and the consequent chance of its author being detected. These securities are thought sufficient to prevent the kindness of the public benefactor being abused. But the robbery at Mr. Hope's not being guarded against by any of these, affords no analogy to those cases which would be so guarded. The property stolen from him was without any of the peculiarities of a voluntary exhibition, and agreed in one particular with every other kind of property, while it was placed (as all outside fittings must be placed), in a situation to afford inducement and security to any dishonest person who walks the street by day or night. Neither does it appear that any thing would follow from the stolen article being a work of art, except that lovers of such works are especially dishonest; and this conclusion is too unjust for Mr. Hope to intend. The fact is, that that which increased its artistic value added to its marketable value, and made it equal to any other temptation of the same intrinsic amount. Further, spite may have had something to do with this injury.

Mr. Hope has so much power to do good in matters relating to the fine arts, that I should be sorry if he were to remain under a wrong impression. I hope he will think, in opposition to the unfortunate occurrence he relates, how very few cases there are in which publicly exhibited property has not been respected even in this country; how still fewer they are on the continent, where the frequency of such exhibitions, by adding to their general estimation, adds also to their security and to the respect felt for those who are the authors of them.

H. W.

* It is now stated, that the arch is to be taken to pieces and the materials sold.

DRAINAGE OF HERTFORD GAOL.

IN late numbers of your journal paragraphs have appeared headed "Effects of Bad Drainage," and "Hertford Gaol Drainage," each having a reference to the other. The county surveyor, a respectable architect, has thought fit, in very marked terms, to show the contempt he entertains for his fellow-townsmen, who have been lately but too frequently called upon to exercise the very painful, but important duties, and to express, as the surveyor is pleased to word it, "the sapient notions of a country coroner's jury." Between the 29th of October and the 6th of November inquests were held by the coroner upon no less than nine prisoners, who died of cholera, and more than one of the juries, consisting of individuals as respectable and as intelligent as the surveyor himself, did not hesitate to express an opinion, founded upon the evidence produced before them, that the drainage of the gaol was so bad that it required the immediate attention of her Majesty's Secretary of State for the Home Department. An inquiry took place, and I only wish, Sir, that a bona-fide report of the depositions made to the "country coroner's jury" were published, and then I think it would be at once admitted that the "notions" of the juries upon the subject, were far more "sapient" than the plan in operation for effecting the drainage of the gaol. You have been referred to an able and respectable "country" editor's "notion" of what has been done, or what can be done, to improve the drainage, and the whole tenor of the paragraph admits it to be insufficient, though indeed it may not have been proved to the inspector sent down by the Government to have been the cause of the fresh outbreak of cholera. Surely, Sir, if the difficulties of draining this gaol are insuperable, it ought to be abandoned, and no more lives risked by confinement in such an unhealthy place.

As a public reflection has been made in your journal by a public officer upon a most respectable body of men, who endeavoured to discharge a very sad and painful public duty as faithfully and as unoffensively as they could, I call on you, in justice, to publish this contradiction, and I assert, without hesitation, that the details furnished to you of the catastrophe at Hertford Gaol were properly included under the head of "Effects of Bad Drainage."

A HERTFORD MAN.

* The writer has forwarded a description of the means of drainage at present in operation there, but no good end would be answered by publishing it, even if we could afford space. Our object in printing his letter is twofold—to exonerate ourselves from the imputation of improperly inserting an erroneous statement, and to direct attention, not merely to whatever may be defective in Hertford Gaol, but to the drainage of many other of our prisons.

COMPETITIONS ADVERTISED LAST WEEK.

IN your last number I see three advertisements for public competitions, the terms of all of which are really too absurd and ridiculous to be passed over unnoticed. In the first, which is for a design for a union workhouse at Stockton, the guardians estimate the labour and time required for furnishing such at the enormous sum of 10*l.*, and say, that if the architect whose plans are selected likes it, he may become the clerk of the works during the erection of the building, at, I suppose, the tempting salary of 2*l.* a-week, provided he is, never absent from the spot! Liberal-minded men! they ought really to have a public testimonial got up for them by the profession at large, for their extreme generosity.*

The second, for a Wesleyan chapel, goes a little beyond the Stockton extravagance, and offers a premium of 35*l.* for the best plans; but then, fearful lest the architect who furnishes them should make too rapid a fortune by obtaining, after his risk, the usual commission for

* This advertisement is an insult to the profession and a disgrace to the Stockton board of guardians. We trust it will meet with the reception it deserves. The architects who submit designs in reply to it, should there be any, will and in the result. We shall be anxious to have their names. A correspondent from Worcester says,—"I would suggest to these guardians, by way of an addendum, that the person who may be as fortunate as to be awarded on the last for promotion be allowed to carry the bricks!"—Ed.